

Requirements for Central Business District Signs

When applying for minor site plan review for a sign in the Central Business District, the Planning Board requires 10 copies of the following;

1. Site Plan Review application (select “Minor Site Plan Review”)
2. Color rendering of the new sign affixed upon your business/property’s façade
3. Details on the type and size of new sign including information on how the sign will be attached to the building

The application fee for “Minor Site Plan Review” of a by-right sign is \$25.00. Additional fees apply for signs regulated by Special Permit.

For additional information on Norwood sign regulation please review the [Norwood Zoning Bylaws Section 6.2](#) or contact the [Norwood Department of Community Planning & Economic Development](#).

Sign Location:

- Locate board signs on the building’s sign-band (usually a panel above the storefront, designed into the architecture to carry a sign)
- Align multiple signs across the building
- Locate signs so they do not hide architectural detailing such as cornices, molding, and decorative trim.
- Provide for building address. Street numbers should be prominently displayed, compatible with sign and storefront design.
- Freestanding signs are permitted for buildings set back from the street. A maximum of one large freestanding sign is permitted per site; fit all signage information on that one structure.
- For window signs, painting on glass or use of neon tubing are preferred over solid boards, as this does not block views. Maximum size is 30% of glass area.
- Individual letters may be mounted directly on the building so that important details or materials are not hidden.

Sign wording:

- Keep sign messages simple: emphasize business name and principal product or service.
- Use logos where possible. “One picture is worth a thousand words”.

- Choose typefaces to complement the store’s image; a message of “modern” or “casual” can easily be conveyed by lettering style.
- Use legible typeface and simple compositions. Leave some blank space around letters; lettering packed tightly on the sign is hard to read. Lowercase lettering is usually easier to read than uppercase, and script can be especially hard to read.
- Follow this rule for letter heights: allow 50 ft. of reading distance for each inch of letter height.
- In general, letter heights on stores should not exceed 16 inches.

Sign design, material, colors, installation:

- Coordinate signs sharing a building by using similar and complementary colors, materials, and graphics.
- Signs in the central business district should designate the business rather than brand-names of products sold.
- Three dimensional signs (carved wood and raised letter signs) express craftsmanship and are encouraged but not required.
- Use stationary signs, without moving or flashing messages, except as permitted by Zoning.
- Internally-illuminated signs are not encouraged; a Special Permit is required.
- Use color to enhance the store’s activity and image. Use 2-3 basic colors.
- Contrast letter color with the sign surface so the message is clear. Light lettering on a dark background is generally easier to read than dark on light. Dark shadow-lines or outlines may be used to make lettering more prominent.
- Use colors and paints that do not “bleed” or fade quickly.
- Although Zoning Bylaws allow non-conforming older signs to be maintained, in the central business district, these Guidelines recommend their replacement.
- Install signs properly. Hardware should either be shielded from view or selected as a special design feature.